

# Special Trust and Confidence

by Col R.D. Heintz, Jr.

In May 1956, the *United States Naval Institute Proceedings* published "Special Trust and Confidence" by Lieutenant Colonel R.D. Heintz, Jr., as its leading article. The impact was quick and decisive. The article attracted nationwide attention and was widely heralded and praised not only in Service journals but also in the public media as well.

In November of the same year the article was reprinted with minor modifications in the *Marine Corps GAZETTE*. Long before that its impact had been felt at least to some degree in all Services. The Commandant had circulated copies to all general officers and published a Marine Corps order launching a drive to correct situations or procedures that restricted the proper prerogatives of commanding officers or derogated the status of officers. Other Services took similar steps.

Over the years the term "Special Trust and Confidence" became a slogan or watchword used repeatedly to call attention to new or perceived violations of the philosophy so forcefully advanced by Col Heintz. As could be expected, the issue has not gone away. Once initial interest died down, bureaucratic pressures and practices reasserted themselves and generated new restrictions on officer status and latitude. *GAZETTE* articles periodically return to the theme and point out new problems. Recent examples appear in Nov83 (p.56) and Feb84 (p.18). In response to many requests, we are reprinting Col Heintz's article as it appeared in USNIP 28 years ago this month.

In a lower-deck, poker game aboard ship, runs an old Navy story, which probably antedates the *Tuscarora* with her five decks and a glass bottom, a sailor had his hand called, announced that he had a winning hand, and threw in his cards, faces down. One of his mates remonstrated, "Let me see those cards."

Replied the first sailor, "In the wardroom the officers don't look at each other's hands."

"Sure," came the answer, "but them sonsabitches is gentlemen!"

The opening words in your commission as an officer in the Armed Forces avow that the President of the United States, no less, reposes "special trust and confidence" in you.

Today, however, that special trust and confidence in you as a commissioned officer is seemingly confined to the President alone.

In the 18th Century, pontificated Samuel Johnson, "An officer is much more respected than any other man who makes as little money." Today, if we are to believe a public opinion survey conducted by the Gallup organization for the Department of Defense,<sup>1</sup> an officer may well be *less* respected than other men who make as little money.

While the Gallup poll certainly documents the point, the fact of diminishing prestige and waning trust and confidence has not gone unnoticed among the general body of commissioned officers. Furthermore, as seen through the eyes of the individual officer, a great deal of the tangible evidence of this derogation comes from within the Department of Defense from policies and attitudes at least partially of our own making.

With this generalization, as with Mr. Gallup's findings, there will be little disagreement. In the following pages, however, I am about to proceed from the general to the very particular by reciting a series of seemingly diverse, sometimes trivial-appearing facts or situations. All of these have to do with the way officers are treated and dealt with in and by the services today. Your first reaction, as you read this bill of particulars, may be to dismiss it as a bunch of gripes, as carping.<sup>2</sup>

Keep your eye on the ball, however.

Read the next few pages not as complaints but as a pragmatic marshalling of evidential symptoms, as an attempt to chart a dangerous shoal by the eddies which ruffle the surface at

low water.

If you do agree, by then, that something must be wrong, we shall try to get to the roots of our trouble and, finally, suggest what ought to be done about it.

But without further parley, here are a few examples of what I have in mind.

On board ships of the Military Sea Transportation Service, your personal check—the check signed by one in whom the President reposes special trust and confidence—will neither be cashed nor accepted in payment of charges. On at least one large MSTS transport, the disbursing office even refuses to accept Travelers' Cheques unless fingerprinted by the individual presenting them. Most civilian hotels will take their chances on an officer, and without benefit of fingerprints. Does MSTS know better?

At a major Marine Corps base, when you apply for post tags for your car, it's not enough that you certify, as an officer, that you are insured. Instead you must produce your policy itself, which is then inspected—to verify your word—by an enlisted man in the Provost Marshal's office. As for that convenient pocket card from your insurance company, certifying that you hold the specified policy, regulations at that base expressly rule it out. The company's card isn't any better than your unsupported word. Let's see that policy, Bud!

When you and your wife ("your lady," officers' wives were once styled, just as you often used to be described as "an officer and a gentleman") enter any post exchange in the Army's European Command, an enlisted sentry or a civilian attendant makes your wife show written identification to prove she is your wife. This goes even when she is with you, and you protest that you're married. Does your word as an officer cut any ice with that enlisted sentry or that civilian attendant who sometimes can



<sup>1</sup> In findings announced by the Department of Defense early this year, the Gallup organization discovered that the public at large ranks officers seventh, as an occupational group, among 19 representative walks of life. Callings which the average civilian rates higher—physician, scientist, lawyer, college professor, or clergyman.

<sup>2</sup> Because what I am writing about is pervasive, not local, I have not identified offending stations or organizations. If anybody wants to know who they are, I will furnish chapter and verse on request. Every horrible example described in this essay has happened to, or is personal knowledge of, the writer.

hardly speak English? Not in the least. No matter what you say,<sup>3</sup> the Army's Exchange Regulations require that your wife prove it in writing.

The same objectionable regulation is enforced with equally objectionable heavy-handedness by the Navy in its large Exchanges in the European (NELM) area.

If you want to cash a personal check at the Officers' Mess maintained by one of our largest overseas Air Forces, you first complete a ten-line written certificate which begins with the fateful words (in LARGE CAPITALS):

"I HEREBY CERTIFY THAT I HAVE SUFFICIENT FUNDS IN (bank) ON WHICH THIS CHECK IS DRAWN, I FULLY UNDERSTAND THAT IF THE STATEMENT MADE ABOVE IS NOT TRUE AND CORRECT, I SHALL BE SUBJECT TO ACTION THROUGH MILITARY CHANNELS AND POSSIBLY DISCIPLINARY ACTION."

After that, you give them ten lines of autobiography which includes everything but the results of a blood test. And then, if the enlisted attendant is satisfied, the Air Force cashes your check.

Just to show that this sort of thing isn't confided to the Air Force, one of the Army's European-area commands only a few months ago prohibited commissary patrons from making purchases with personal checks. This ukase extended to officers and their families and, as the buying group most apt to have checking accounts, was principally aimed at them. There is hardly a supermarket in the United States that won't honor a customer's personal check providing he identifies himself reasonably (no problem for an officer or his lady). But not "X" Area Command!

When an officer on temporary additional duty requires Defense Department transportation in Washington, D.C., that car is not allowed to pick him up at (or deliver him to) any private residence. If he happens to be staying at a private address instead of a hotel, that makes no never-mind; he takes a taxi to the nearest hotel and waits for his staff car there. Why? "To prevent misuse of Government vehicles" was the only answer I could get. More bluntly, I think, you can paraphrase that to mean, they don't trust you. No telling what kind of private residence an officer may be at. Sure, you can trust him with a 17,000-ton cruiser or a million-dollar airplane, but not with a staff car.

Making an allotment of pay to a bank for a savings account seems like a pretty straightfor-

ward transaction, but even here the Navy's otherwise admirable disbursing system manages to create a situation in which an officer has to get someone else (a civilian) to prove that his word is good. Before you can register such an allotment to a bank, you must satisfy the paymaster with written evidence from the bank that it will accept your allotment. In other words, even though you may certify that all arrangements are in order, you are still a liar as far as the disbursing officer is concerned, until you prove the truth of your statement by a letter from the bank. Then, and then only, will your allotment be registered.

What happens first thing when you check in at a BOQ? You pay a deposit.

That deposit, which is refunded when you leave, is to make sure you don't run off with the towels and sheets or tumblers. You are posting bond, in other words, that you won't pilfer. In the officers' messes of most foreign countries, such a requirement would be considered a dishonorable affront. Here it's a routine formality—like getting fingerprinted.

Until well into World War II, a commissioned officer could pay for food, drink, or tobacco at almost any establishment in the Navy or Marine Corps by the simple act of signing his name and rank on a chit. The chit system, which has all but vanished under our eyes, was an everyday reminder to the service that an officer's word is (was, I mean) his bond. The chit system was a perfect example of *privilege wedded to responsibility*. Today you pay cash on the barrelhead.

By way of comparison, it may well be worthy of note that an officer in the British forces signs chits for food, drink, cash, or whatever, at virtually any mess under the Union Jack, goes on his way, and finds the charges reflected by mail on his next mess bill at home. He would be affronted at not being allowed to sign a chit, let alone being asked to pay up before departure.

If, for reasons which seem good, a Navy officer wants the temporary use of a self-driven vehicle, even for a single run, he must fill in a long form (NAVDOKS 1057, revised 5-52). This preposterous multiplication of paperwork entails fourteen separate entries and two signatures other than that of the officer who wants the car. It demands certification "that the vehicle requested is to be used for official business," thus clearly implying that officers are not above diverting Government transportation to illegal use. Then, when you get down to "Purpose of Trip," comes a formal affront: "Official business is not an adequate answer." Any officer who works his way through this form might find it difficult to escape the conclusion that, as far as BuDocks is concerned, the general run of officers are potential liars.

To twist this particular sword in a wound already raw, one of the largest shore-based

headquarters in the Navy requires that each single-trip request for transportation, even with an official driver, be submitted in writing on this abominable piece of paper. What this does to the efficiency of the command, through constraining transportation and multiplying paperwork, might well interest the Inspector General. What, by implication, it suggests about the officers in this important headquarters should alarm anyone.

In 1950, a major Marine Corps post, without warning and for no stated cause, shut down service of drinks in the officers' mess at noontime—a privilege which had existed for more than a decade. The reason given unofficially for this abolition of privilege was that "some people are taking advantage of it"—in other words, that a few individuals wouldn't or couldn't govern their lunch-hour drinking. Similar noon blue laws now cast arid shadows over a large percentage of the officers' messes of all services. And the US Navy, alone among the major naval forces of the world, is not allowed to trust its commissioned officers to the extent of permitting controlled shipboard consumption of alcohol (even by cabin passengers on an MSTs transport!). Must we conclude—and does the management really mean to infer—that every officer of the Navy and Marine Corps is a potential alcoholic if allowed a drink between noon and one o'clock when ashore, or at any time when aboard ship, even alongside a dock?

A fine vote of confidence.

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Almost anybody who reads the foregoing examples (and they are by no means all that can be adduced) will agree, "Yes, it certainly is a shame officers don't seem to get credit any longer for being gentlemen. But,"—he may add—"don't they bring it on themselves?"

Wouldn't MSTs (or "X" Area Command) cash your checks without hesitation, if all of them were good? Ditto the Air Force, where you sign away your life before they accept a five dollar check?

Wouldn't the Marine Corps base register your car without question if sad experience hadn't shown that a few officers said they had insurance, and they really didn't?

Couldn't you escort your wife into any post exchange without question if some individuals hadn't slipped by with ladies whose relationship was somewhat less binding?

Would the Defense Department restrict its car to picking up people at hotels only if some runs to other addresses hadn't resulted in real abuse? And why, unless somebody had overstepped, would BuDocks be asking for fourteen entries and three signatures in return for a drive across the base?

Why should the paymaster want to see a letter from your bank if he hadn't experienced

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<sup>3</sup> This regulation was so affrontingly enforced at two large exchanges in the EuCom that the writer originated an official protest against the policy, to make certain that these orders meant what they implied—that an officer's statement that a lady accompanying him was his wife wasn't good enough for the Army. The official reply, a fine commentary on the state of affairs, said just that.

the bother and snafu of untangling an allotment to a bank: that didn't want the account, though the grantor said it did?

Don't BOQ's require that deposit because officers do run off with towels and keys?

If every officer took care to hold his liquor before lunch, and could be trusted to drink with discretion aboard ship, would existing "blue law" regulations continue in force?

And isn't it one of the main causes for the demise of the chit system that too many chits come back signed "John Paul Jones," "W.T. Door," "U.S. Marr?"

The answer to all the foregoing questions, unfortunately, is "yes."

But surely, readers may interject, so what if the answers are "yes"? Aren't all these matters quite trivial? Who worries if it's a little harder to cash a check? And what's so terrible about somebody's borrowing a towel from the BOQ? As for that BuDocks form, everyone knows that there's been more paperwork since unification, anyway.

Admittedly, any of these things is, in itself, small—just like the cloud that was no bigger than a man's hand. Or like the above-water fraction of an iceberg. But as long as things like this go on at all, we have a problem on our hands.

The crux of this problem involves much more than towels, post exchanges, and motor transport. It is simply this: an alarming erosion of the status, privilege, and confidence heretofore reposed in the officer corps has taken place under our very eyes. This erosion has awakened widespread complaint, frustration, and even bitterness, among officers who have served any length of time. It has unquestionably discouraged likely young men of high caliber from becoming regular officers. By levelling out distinctions between officers and enlisted men, it has imposed serious handicaps on leadership of the most effective quality.

### The Roots of the Problem

Much of the blame for this soured climate of attitude toward and among the officer corps can be attributed to a half dozen principal causes. These are:

- 1) Egalitarianism on the national scene.
- 2) Continuing large size of the Armed Forces.
- 3) Lower caliber and easygoing indoctrination of young officers.
- 4) Tendency of administrative thick-headedness to override individual discretion and ordinary common sense.
- 5) Side effects of the Universal Code of Military Justice.
- 6) General relaxation of officer discipline and officer self-discipline.

*Egalitarianism*—A pervasive spirit of egalitarianism, abroad throughout the world, is nowhere stronger than here at home.

At naked fundamentals; egalitarianism and

the concept of an officer corps are irreconcilable. Egalitarianism attacks all distinctions, particularly distinctions of rank. Egalitarianism attempts to deny the underlying superior individual qualities of which rank, is or should be, the earned reward. Egalitarianism is the enemy of the special responsibilities and, even more so, of the special privileges of leaderships.

A military example of egalitarianism at work was the Army's Doolittle Board of 1946, which, however well intended, spearheaded a grossly misdirected drive to commingle officers, on a footing of indistinguishable equality, with the men they were supposed to lead. The Russians, who had long since realized the folly of egalitarianism in a military organization, laughed at the Doolittle Board (and undoubtedly did everything in their power to egg it on).

Egalitarianism shows itself on the military scene by such symptoms as:

—Proposals that officer and NCO insignia of rank be made small and inconspicuous, and that officer uniforms be of identical design and cut with enlisted men's (or vice versa—like the recent suggestion that Navy enlisted men have gold buttons on their peacoats).

—Commingle of officers' and enlisted families in military housing projects; similar commingling of officers and enlisted passengers and their dependents on board MSTs ships.

—Application to officers of Civil Service and Veterans Administration regulations, precedents, and procedures (particularly in the field of retirement, leave, and compensation)—as if officers were just another category of Government clerk.

—The requirement that officers in Government quarters cut lawns and rake leaves; until a decade ago this was unheard of—a salutary chore for prisoners and PAL's. Now it's up to the colonels and the colonels' ladies.

—Failure to provide separate and adequate dining facilities for officers—a lapse of which the Navy Department (but not the Pentagon) is guilty in its two principal Washington headquarters buildings, where officers up to the rank of commander have the choice of queueing up and sharing tables with their subordinate clerks and enlisted men, or of eating lunch out of brown paper bags.

Those are only examples. It requires no legendary powers of observation to discern a host of similar instances wherever you look. The main theme seems to be—just because he's an officer, why treat him differently from anybody else? Why does he rate this or that? The seaman or the private doesn't.

*Continuing Large Size of the Armed Forces*.—The late Justice Brandeis knew what he was talking about when he inveighed against "the curse of Bigness." One direct result of sheer size in today's Armed Forces is

that we are no longer "a band of brothers"; this of course stunts the mutual growth of "special trust and confidence" among officers, particularly so between the higher administrative headquarters and the officers they administer. Few strangers instinctively trust other strangers. *And today more commissioned officers are on active duty in the four services than the total strength of the Armed Forces twenty years ago.*

As long as we stay this large, maintenance of an elite officer corps, with corresponding status, effectiveness and mutual confidence, will be difficult.

*Lower Caliber and Easygoing Indoctrination of Young Officers*.—A direct product of our having an officer corps which is about the size of the entire British Army is that the large annual intake of new officers must represent, statistically, a diminution of caliber and quality. We read in the press, and know too well from the observation that—as Mr. Gallup says—a career as a Regular officer is not as attractive today to most young men as it was before World War II. One reason for this phenomenon is that the services as a whole demand more new regular officers per year than there are (or, probably ever have been) thoroughly motivated, high-caliber candidates who really want to become professional officers, as distinct from mere jobholders.

This requirement for officer quantity at the expense of officer quality can only result in lower standards throughout the officer corps. And officers with lower professional and individual standards receive—and what is much worse, accept—treatment unheard of in the service twenty years ago.

Furthermore, this submergence of officers into a sea of quantitative mediocrity is made all the worse through necessarily hasty, mass-production methods employed to indoctrinate new officers and candidates. Such mass methods work hand in hand with egalitarianism. Easy-going, sometimes misdirected or undirected indoctrination of new officers perpetuates individual mediocrity and breeds a group (not a corps) of officers who are prepared to accept diminished standards and status as the norm.

*Administrative Thickheadedness vs. Individual Discretion*.—One hallmark of a truly professional corps of officers is wide individual discretion to decide and act, on the basis of sound principles and common sense. In other words, the assumption that it doesn't require a large highly codified body of regulations to enable a trusted executive to recognize and do what is right.

This assumption, once fundamental in the service, now seems to go not only unheeded, but is ground underfoot in the mass of petty regulations which emanate from high levels and low. Hand in hand with this torrent of prescriptive procedures goes dangerous inflexibility.

For example:

In the post exchange of "Y" Area Command, European Theater, a captain stands watch daily to supervise what is in fact a large business enterprise. Yet when confronted with the simple decision of whether to accord purchasing privileges to a transient but fully identified regular officer, that captain was so circumscribed by over-explicit, trust-nobody regulations that this weighty dilemma had to be referred for ultimate decision not one but two echelons up the chain of command! This unfortunate officer literally was permitted less discretion in doing a heavy job than the average sentinel walking post. A floorwalker at Gimbel's enjoys ten times the latitude and power of decision.

Another example: did you know that the Department of Defense, no less, prescribes by written regulation the number of times a week garbage is to be collected from public quarters?

The weight of monolithic, impersonal, over-detailed regulations, written and enforced by career administrators, does more to crush the exercise of individual discretion than any other factor in today's Armed Services. Individual latitude to do what seems right is the hallmark of "special trust and confidence." Thus administrative trends throughout the Department of Defense (often those imposed by that Department) wittingly or unwittingly are among the worst enemies of "special trust and confidence."

*Uniform Code of Military Justice.*—UCMJ (correctly) has been damned right and damned left by almost everyone who has had to exercise command since the sad day when Articles for the Government of the Navy went down into history. It is not a purpose of this essay to level further general criticism, however merited, against UCMJ.

UCMJ, however, has greatly furthered the diminution of "special trust and confidence" in four respects, all serious:

1) UCMJ has fostered and even demanded a horde of specific regulations which paralyze initiative and deny individual discretion.

2) UCMJ has deprived individual commanding officers of considerable customary latitude in disciplining officer subordinates.

3) UCMJ equates commissioned officers and enlisted men wherever possible (example: allowing enlisted members on courts martial).

4) The underlying premise of UCMJ—as is clearly evident from the hearings which preceded its adoption—is mistrust of the discretionary exercise of authority by commanding officers, or "command interference," as UCMJ's lawyer (and sea lawyer) proponents repeatedly styled it. The Uniform Code of Military Justice is an embodied renunciation of "special trust and confidence."

#### **Officer Self-Discipline and Discipline.**

—Destructive of "special trust and confidence" as are the foregoing five factors, one remains which is far more fundamental. That factor is the capability and willingness of the officer corps to discipline itself.

In other words, to live up to the principle of *noblesse oblige*.

Application of *noblesse oblige* to the behavior of commissioned officers has two prongs.

**One prong is self-discipline.** Self-discipline should apply to everybody, but as we can all see, doesn't always. Simple lack of self-discipline on the part of a given number of individual officers can be found at or near the bottom of many of the restrictions—insulting by implication—which I have recited.

In other words, almost every galling, often insulting denial of "special trust and confidence" can be traced back to some failure, at some place, at some point of time, to keep our own house in order.

**The second prong of *noblesse oblige* is discipline**—in this context, the willingness of officers to apply discipline to other officers who transgress the standards of their corps.

Discipline takes one of two forms. Either you apply mass restrictions and punishments against a group which contains some offenders (a weak, evasive "remedy" which is no remedy). Or you single out offenders, deal with them according to their deserts, and leave the unoffending majority undisturbed.

Every one of the deplorable citations with which this essay begins is an example of penalizing many for derelictions of the few. Most of these embarrassing restrictions would be unthinkable if commanding officers always exercised the moral courage to punish the minority of individuals who have brought down upon the vast unoffending majority the shotgun restraints I described.

If, for example, you pay your mess bills with checks which repeatedly bounce, why shouldn't you get ten days under hack, or a court martial?

If you say you have insurance, and then don't, why shouldn't the commanding general recommend you for a general court martial?

It is well remembered by those of us with service before World War II that such misbehavior by officers did bring down severe individual retribution. Also that such misbehavior was infrequent to the point of rarity. Also that in those pre-War days officers enjoyed many more privileges (including unquestionable acceptance of their word). Q.E.D.

Today, sad to tell, official retribution for unofficerlike and ungentlemanly offenses seems to have declined. To cite only one example—a *reductio ad absurdum*, maybe, but it really did happen

The officers' club at an East Coast naval air station had so many long standing delinquent accounts in 1948 that the President of the Mess (an officer of command rank) promulgated a circular letter to all members, warning, that those who failed to pay up within a generous deadline would...

Be subject to prompt disciplinary action for disregard of their obligations as officers and gentlemen? Not at all.

What the Mess threatened, believe it or not, was that delinquent accounts would be turned over to a civilian bill-collecting agency.

One general court martial would have collected every outstanding bill.

#### **How to Restore Special Trust and Confidence**

"Special trust and confidence," unfortunately, is the easiest thing in the world to tear down. Building it up is something else again.

However difficult the job may prove, it must be done. The respect and high regard which until recently were accorded officers as a matter of course must be restored and stabilized. The alternative is retrogression of the officer corps to a collection of high-paid clerks and mediocre straw-basses—men lacking status, motivation, assurance, and habit of authority, unschooled in self-discipline and leadership. It could happen. In fact, it is happening.

To regain and hold "special trust and confidence" will be an all-hands evolution—an evolution in some senses against the climate of the times. Nor will this counter-revolution be accomplished from outside the service through "fringe benefits," pay raises, and such, while individual officers carry on as if nothing were really happening.

What is required can be summed up under eight headings. Action in response to those headings will be required not only from every individual officer who respects his profession and status, but particularly from:

—Top civilian and military policy-makers in the Department of Defense and the military departments.

—Commanding officers, high and low.

—Officer-training establishments.

—Staff officers charged with formulation of policy.

Here, then, are my eight points:

**Point 1:** Overhaul existing law and regulations to eliminate every provision which tends to reflect against or demean the status of commissioned officers.

Anybody who doubts the dimensions of the effort I propose should try to visualize the Five-Thousand Foot Bookshelf of laws and regulations which now weigh down the Armed Forces. Every single one of those laws and regulations deserves a currying off to determine whether or not, overtly or by

implication, it tends to diminish or asperse the "special trust and confidence" which the Government—it says here—reposes in a commissioned officer.

At department level, the three Judges Advocate General of the military departments could well convene *ad hoc* review panels to go through the mass of military and naval laws which have only recently been recodified. Such panels should not only review the letter but particularly the implications and even the phrasing of existing law. Where amendment or repeal of legislation seems desirable, they should so recommend, and a Department of Defense legislative "package" should be evolved and presented to the Congress.

Admitting, even as I propose it, the difficulties and obstacles which would beset what I have just suggested, I believe that such a comprehensive review of legislation would generate a by-product with great value for the future: a code of "don'ts" for legislative draftsmen who wish to protect the status of command and authority throughout the services. Such canons could then be used by the Judges Advocate General in reviewing proposed legislation, and by the staffs of the respective Armed Services Committees.

A particular objective in this review might be to check or reverse today's deplorable trend to apply to officers legislative precedents and legislation dealing with the mass of Government employees and with veterans as a class.

Overhauling regulations will be even more work than reviewing law, at least as far as the rank and file are concerned, but because a bad regulation—unlike a bad law—can be cured by a stroke of the pen, will pay greater immediate dividends.

Starting right in with the Department of Defense itself, carrying on in the military departments, and penetrating down into every command big enough to have a typewriter, every single regulation ought to be reviewed to determine whether, by direct effect, implication, or phrasing, it tends to reflect upon or asperse the prestige, status or authority of officers, or question the word of an officer. Such a review was, in fact, initiated last year by a large Air Force base. The commanding general deserves a medal.

To insure that such a review would be truly effective, the Secretary of the Navy could issue basic instructions advertising his policy. At Washington level, *Navy Regulations*, the *Marine Corps Manual* and the bureau manuals should be scanned. So also should the mass of general orders, SecNav and OpNav instructions, and the like. At each turn the reviewers should ask, "Does this regulation or procedure support, or does it undermine 'special trust and confidence'?" Any item in the latter category should be ruthlessly axed. And the same overhaul should proceed concurrently in every command which issues

ship's regulations, base regulations, exchange regulations, and so on.

Moreover, there is no need for commanding officers to wait for the starting gun from Washington. This is something you can begin tomorrow morning; better still, today.

**Point 2:** *Restore officer initiative and discretion to act.*

As part of the grand review and sifting of law and regulation just proposed, we should consider another aspect of the problem: the increasing tendency of service regulations and administration to curb exercise of individual initiative by officers, commanding officers in particular.

A thoughtful Marine general officer, now retired, used to observe that a philosophic difference between Army/Air Force administration and Navy/Marine administration is this: in the Army and the Air Force, you can't do it unless the book says you can, and you can prove it; whereas the Department of the Navy, within limits of propriety and common sense, **permitted commanding officers to do anything not specifically prohibited.** This generalization may have been unfair to the Army and Air Force, but it certainly underscored what ought to be the governing principle of military command.

Right and left in this over-regulated profession of ours, we find attempts as repeated as they are doomed to perpetual failure, **to substitute regulations and procedures for common sense, judgment, discretion, and inherent sense of propriety.**

Certainly and admittedly, very few regulations are written—like the trajectory we all studied in Ordnance—"in vacuo." That is, almost every regulation, especially if prohibitive, springs from some mistake of malfeasance which actually happened.

But you cannot legislate against damn foolishness, human aberration, or individual wickedness. What we can do, and ought to do, is to devote less effort to composing and enforcing shotgun procedures and prohibitions, and commensurately more effort to obtain, train, and retain a corps of officers blessed with the qualities which would obviate such regulatory harassment.

Restoration of wide discretion to act, and confidence that such action—when manifestly sensible in the premises—would be sustained regardless of whether it could pass through the "no-go" gauge of set procedure, would be a shot of adrenalin to every CO in the Armed Forces.

"I'm sorry, but my hands are tied by regulations," are the saddest words ever spoken by military tongue or pen.

**Point 3:** *Officers must be indoctrinated with the officer spirit.*

This sounds like a ringing denunciation of sin, or a plea for improved weather.

If you think it over, however, you will realize that basic officer training today tends to concentrate on technique and skimp on attitude. But any psychologist will assure you that an individual learns, unlearns, and relearns techniques all his life, while only once—and early—does he acquire his fundamental attitudes.

I say that our officer-molding institutions—the service academies, Marine Corps Basic School and, in their degree, NROTC and ROTC—should concentrate above all on producing the officer attitude. Once we create that, the rest is easy.

**To create officer attitude—**

Officer students must be schooled in conduct and behavior. This schooling must extend beyond working hours so that it conditions an officer's social reactions as well as his professional ones.

The high traditions and history of the profession of arms must be brought home to every new officer. These traditions must be preached as living codes, not as historical curiosities or statistics. The fledgling officer must take his first steps in an atmosphere permeated by tradition and regulated by the officer's code.

Corps, unit, and service folkways must be underscored. Inter-service distinctions, where not positively harmful, should be proudly fostered and encouraged. The young officer should never be mongrelized into an amorphous, faceless being with no spiritual roots save in what former Assistant Secretary of the Navy John Nicholas Brown once deplored as "the vast complex of the Defense Department." He should be trained to be proud of his outfit, that outfit should be unique, and he should be proud of that, too.

Above all, young officers should be taught the true dignity that goes with the high responsibilities they inherit. If *noblesse oblige* is a good motto for officers, they must not only learn well their obligations but also a little of the *noblesse*.

**Point 4:** *Officer discipline must be unsparing.*

**Officers who transgress the code of their profession must be punished.** In most cases they should be gotten rid of. Misguided reluctance on the part of commanding officers to do individual hurt must give way to realization that the price we pay for "special trust and confidence" is unsparing personal accountability.

If the individual failings which have given rise to blanket restrictions and erosion of officer status had been dealt with individually, the horrible examples with which this essay commences need never have existed.

Furthermore, unsparing officer discipline oughtn't to start with the cases on the critical



list—that is, at the general court martial stage. Commanding officers must discover the moral courage—and be fully supported by higher commanders—to correct and bring to notice officers whose habits and qualities are in the least below par.

An administrative reform which would greatly facilitate such corrective action would be a more realistic philosophy of fitness reporting so that individuals could be routinely appraised in their defects as well as in their virtues.

But commanding officers are not the only ones concerned with officer discipline. **Every officer must be jealous of the special trust and confidence reposed in the whole officer corps.**

**Point 5:** *Give privilege with responsibility.*

It used to be unquestioned in the service scheme of things that officer privileges were the earned reward of heavy responsibility. Today responsibilities are heavier than ever, but precious few privileges remain.

This is no plea for “fringe benefits.” It is rather a plea for confidence, for latitude of action, and for intentional gradations of privilege between executives, junior executives, foremen, and the shop force—if we may couch this in the language of industry.

Open the officers' mess bar at noon, detail prisoners to cut lawns, establish a section in the Navy Department cafeterias for officers only, let officers sign chits and cash checks without question, let a Defense Department sedan go to an officer's front door, stop charging deposits for towels in the BOQ, stop the PXs from treating officers and their wives as potential chiselers.

And be quite open about it.

As long as we take the attitude that it is reprehensible to receive privilege as such, exercise of that privilege, however well earned, will be subject to logical question. What we should instead be concerned about is the exercise of privilege not well earned.

**Point 6:** *Enlisted men must be kept out of positions which require them to supervise officers.*

“Enlisted men supervise officers?—Nonsense! That never happens.” Doesn't it, though! An example? Only a few months ago, one service had military policemen roving the Pentagon with the express purpose of jacking up officers on their appearance and uniforms—and this in public, too.

So it does happen, and is happening more and more throughout the service. Every time an enlisted man is so placed that he has discretion to do anything but comply with the proper request or instructions of an officer, he is in reality supervising that officer. Every time your personal check is initialled by a ship's service attendant, he is in reality vouching for you. If an officer has to produce

any sort of proof to support his word or certification (like the proof of liability insurance I mentioned earlier), this should never be required in the presence of, let alone by, an enlisted man.

One sector of service life which requires special attention to prevent enlisted men sitting in judgment of commissioned officers is personnel administration. We are all too familiar with the almighty, all wise perennially seated, self-satisfied career administrators: complacent yeomen, bloated master sergeants and their snide, imitative clerks.

What gives rise to this paperwork empire, where being tied by regulations is a virtue not a tragedy, is largely today's plethora of written regulations, procedures, and prohibitions. In our review of these regulations, we should eliminate every provision which calls into issue, before enlisted men, the word or good faith of a commissioned officer.

**Point 7:** *Unsnarl the Uniform Code of Military Justice.*

Here is one area in which the military departments are already fighting manfully. Let us applaud and support the efforts of our Judges Advocate General to secure amelioration of some of the wearying burdens with which UCMJ has saddled the services. While they are at it, let us hope they will seek every opportunity to:

- Eliminate the existing legal requirements for today's plethora of regulations;

- Restore latitude and discretion to COs in the exercise of disciplinary powers;

- Take enlisted members off courts martial.

It is too much to hope for restoration of John Adams's oak-ribbed, brass-bound *Articles for the Government of the Navy*, with their fine antique ring, but the more nearly we can bring the cross-fertilized, artificially inseminated UCMJ to resemble its grand ancestor, the better. “Special trust and confidence” pervaded every line of AGN, which is more than can be said for UCMJ.

**Point 8:** *Officers must insist on being treated like officers.*

It is small wonder, in a service environment already too little hospitable to “special trust and confidence,” that officers today often fail to receive former deference; perquisites, and, above all, the unquestioning respect of their subordinates.

Admitting this to be so, and why, it nevertheless still lies in the power of almost any individual officer—you, or you, or you, gentlemen—to obtain, to exact if need be, much of the treatment and status which were once bestowed automatically.

Obviously the first step, the foundation, is that officers behave, dress, and comport themselves like officers, both on duty and off. This is fundamental, if “special trust and confidence” is ever again to be restored.

When an officer so behaving, dressed as he

should be, and engaged “on his lawful occasions,” encounters any failure to accord him the status or deference which the situation reasonably demands, he should say and do something about it forthwith.

This doesn't mean that officers should spend their time and energy preening themselves to be affronted.

It does mean that when you encounter the kind of demeaning situations detailed at the outset of this essay, you should do everything in your power, by proper official complaint, by reiterated suggestion, by written report, and by refusal to be pushed about by those of lower rank and status, to eliminate the cause. It does mean that you must know your rights and proper privileges, and you must be quick to defend them.

In other words, **you must insist on being treated like an officer.** Do so habitually and firmly and you will find yourself being more nearly so treated.

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Anyone who doubts the effects of diminished “special trust and confidence,” or who doubts that the services face a real problem in the crumbling prestige of the officer corps, would do well to see how many young men are now choosing careers as professional officers. And how many, sad to relate, are resigning.<sup>4</sup>

In 1955, less than 4% of those eligible in the Navy for integration as regular officers chose to integrate. And this, mark you, was about half as many, percentage-wise, from the same group, as chose to accept Regular commissions only two years earlier.

From distinguished graduates of the Army's ROTC and OCS, there were in 1954 some 60% fewer applications for regular commissions than in 1949. Over the same period, the number of Regular Army Officer resignations quadrupled.

Air Force officer resignations in 1954 were five times those in 1949.

Only in the Marine Corps was the situation relatively satisfactory.

Alarming as they are, the foregoing statistics fail to reveal how many officers chose not to become regulars, or how many regulars quit, simply on account of waning “special trust and confidence.” Nor do available statistics tell how many of those who did become regular officers were the mediocre and the less qualified—those to whom “special trust and confidence” means least.

But of this we may be sure—the officers who by their “... Patriotism, Valor, Fidelity, and Abilities” most deserve the special trust and confidence of their country are those who feel its loss soonest and most keenly.

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<sup>4</sup> Statistics from “Armed Services Legislation, 84th Congress, 1st Session,” by Lt. Col. J.R. Blandford, USMCR, October, 1955 PROCEEDINGS